Viral Hepatitis Markers and Their Significance

Marker	Definition	Common Terminology	What does a positive test mean?
HAV	Hepatitis A virus		
Anti-HAV IgM	Antibody to hepatitis A virus, IgM fraction	HAV IgM	Acute illness (within 6 months) or recent HAV vaccination (rarely)
Anti-HAV	Antibody to hepatitis A virus (combined total of IgM and IgG)	Total HAV	Either recent or previous illness or immunity due to vaccine (does not distinguish between IgG and IgM)
HBV	Hepatitis B virus		
HBsAg	Hepatitis B surface antigen	Surface antigen	Infection with HBV (additional tests needed to determine if chronically or acutely infected)
Anti-HBs	Antibody to hepatitis B surface antigen	Surface antibody	Immunity to HBV (due to natural infection or HBV vaccination)
HBeAg	Hepatitis B "e" antigen	e antigen	Active viral replication and increased risk of transmitting HBV
Anti-HBe	Hepatitis B "e" antibody	e antibody	Low viral replication level in HBsAg-positive persons
Anti-HBc	Antibody to hepatitis B core antigen	Core antibody	Natural infection (acute, resolved, or chronic); not present after immunization
HBcAg	Hepatitis B core antigen	N/A	THIS TEST NOT COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE
Anti-HBc IgM	Antibody to hepatitis B core, IgM fraction	Core IgM	Current or recent HBV infection (within 6 months); presence of anti-HBc IgM without HBsAg denotes "window" phase late in some acute HBV infections where HBsAg has dropped below detectable levels; can persist in some chronic HBV infections
Anti-HBc IgG	Antibody to hepatitis B core, IgG fraction	Core IgG	Past or chronic HBV infection
HBV PCR	Polymerase chain reaction for hepatitis B virus DNA	HBV PCR	Measures viral load; used to monitor response to HBV anti-viral therapy
HCV	Hepatitis C virus		

Anti-HCV EIA	Enzyme immunoassay for antibody to hepatitis C virus	Anti-HCV EIA	Either acute, resolved, or chronic HCV infection
Anti-HCV RIBA	Recombinant immunoblot assay for antibody to hepatitis C virus	RIBA	Supplemental antibody test used to verify a positive anti-HCV EIA result
HCV RT- PCR Qualitative	Qualitative reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction test for hepatitis C virus RNA	HCV PCR Qualitative	Supplemental HCV RNA test used to verify an anti-HCV EIA result. A single negative PCR test result is not conclusive, as viral RNA detection may be intermittent.
HCV RT- PCR Quantitative	Quantitative reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction test for hepatitis C virus RNA	HCV PCR Quantitative	Supplemental HCV RNA test to measure viral load; used to monitor response to anti-viral therapy (TEST NOT STANDARDIZED; NOT YET FDA-APPROVED)